

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-10 AF-06 ARA-06 EB-07 /099 W

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R 170830Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3510

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 ALGIERS 3599

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, SREF, AG, MO, SS, MR

1. SUMMARY: ALGERIANS MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO CAPTURE WORLD'S ATTENTION WITH STORIES OF MOROCCAN ATROCITIES IN SAHARA. THERE HAS BEEN SOME ECHOING OF ALGERIAN THEMES IN SPANISH AND FRENCH PRESS. ALGERIANS WILL PROBABLY NEED CONTINUING POLISARIO ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS THOSE REPORTED IN SOUTHERN PART OF COLONY, IF PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN IS TO BE SUSTAINED. WHETHER POLISARIO EQUAL TO THIS TASK REMAINS TO BE SEEN. END SUMMARY.

2. MILITARY SITUATION: PRESS DECEMBER 16 FEATURES ALLEGED SUCCESSES OF POLISARIO, PARTICULARLY IN FIGHTING MAURITANIANS:

A. MAURITANIAN FRONT: PRESS CLAIMS THAT MAURITANIAN FORCES CHECKED AT LA GUERA, DAKHLA (VILLA CISNEROS) AND TICHLA, DESPITE MASSIVE MOROCCAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN BOTH ARMS AND PERSONNEL. ACCORDING TO REPORT MAURITANIANS TRIED TO CAPTURE LA GUERA BY SEA, USING COASTAL PATROL VESSEL NAMED "IDINI". MAURITANIAN DEATHS PUT AT 39 AT TICHLA AND 27 AT LA GUERA. MAURITANIANS ORDERED FIGHTING, WHICH SAID TO HAVE BEEN INTENSE ON DECEMBER 10, FOLLOWING VISIT BY COLONEL DLIMI TO MAURITANIA DECEMBER 3.

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B. SABOTAGE: PRESS SAYS POLISARIO SUCCEEDED IN SABOTAGING

MAURITANIAN RAILROAD ALONG SAHARA BORDER AT POINT 150
KILOMETERS FROM NOUADHIBOU AFTER HEAVY FIGHTING.
(PARIS 32705). MOVEMENT OF PHOSPHATE ORE ALONG BOU CRAA
CONVEYOR BELT ALSO REPORTED INTERRUPTED FOLLOWING POLISARIO
ATTACK ON BELT STATION NUMBER 9. THIS MAY BE SAME ATTACK
REFERRED TO IN DECEMBER 14-15 EDITION OF LE MONDE.

C. OTHER: PRESS CLAIMS THAT POLISARIO CARRIED OUT ATTACKS
IN MAURITANIAN TERRITORY AT BIR MOGHREIN AND AIN BENTILI
(WHERE TWO MAURITANIANS SAID TO HAVE BEEN KILLED) AND AT
ZAG, MESEID AND CHEBIKIYA IN MOROCCO. ON DEMBER 10, PRESS
SAYS MINES PLANTED BY POLIARIO BETWEEN TAN TAN AND TAH
IN MOROCCO WERE SET OFF BY TRUCKS FULL OF MOROCCAN TROOPS.

3. MOROCCAN ATROCITIES: DECEMBER 15 BACKGROUND PRESS
REPORT BY ALGERIE PRESSE SERVICE CORRESPONDENT SAID TO BE
IN SMARA GIVES MOST GRAPHIC AND EXHAUSTIVE LISTING TO DATE
OF ALLEGED MOROCCAN ATROCITIES
IN SAHARA. FOLLOWING PRINCIPAL POINTS OF ARTICLE GIVE
TONE ALGERIAN PRESS TAKING ON THIS SUBJECT:

A. 15,000 OF TOWN'S 18,000 POPULATION CHOSE TO FLEE RATHER
THAN REMAIN AFTER ARRIVAL OF MOROCCAN ARMY (FAR),
WHICH STRUGGLING TO HOLD OUT AGAINST POLISARIO ATTACKS
AND WHICH UNABLE TO MOVE FAR FROM TOWN.

B. POPULATION, ALMOST ENTIRELY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, KEPT
UNDER GUARD IN TOWN SQUARE BY NIGHT AND ONLY ALLOWED
TO RETURN TO THEIR PILLAGED HOMES DURING DAY. IN
MORNING, MOROCCAN OFFICERS HAVE YOUNG SAHRAOUI WOMEN
ARRESTED AND TAKEN TO THEIR QUARTERS. MOROCCAN SOLDIERS
FREQUENTLY STEAL CLOTHING FROM SAHRAOUI HOMES IN ORDER
TO DISGUISE THEMSELVES AS SAHRAOIS TO
CHEER WHEN MOROCCAN DIGNITARIES ENTER TOWN.

C. SMARANS NOW PAY HOMAGE TO MOROCCAN FLAGS AND
PORTRAITS OF KING HASSAN WHICH FAR HAVE PLACED IN EACH
HOME. REFUSAL TO DO SO HAD BEEN GROUND FOR INSTANT EXECUTION,
AND ONE WOMAN HAD BEEN STAMPED TO DEATH BY FAR PERSONNEL WHEN SHE
REFUSED TO CHEER FOR COLONEL DLIMI.

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D. FAR FORCED REFUGEES, OR PASSING NOMADS, TO RETURN TO TOWN.

3. TOTAL SAHARA REFUGEE POPULATION NOW 35,000.

F. SHALLOW GRAVES OF SAHRAOIS, PARTICULARLY CHILDREN
WHO HAVE SUCCUMBED TO COLD AND FAMINE, FREQUENT SIGHT IN
SMARA REGION.

4. GOA AND GOM TRADE ABUSES: PRESS DECEMBER 16 REPORTS THAT 300 MOROCCANS, WHO SAID TO BE LIVING IN IRREGULAR SITUATION IN ALGERIA, HAD BEEN EXPELLED FOUR DAYS EARLIER. GOA MAKING PREPARATIONS TO RECEIVE ALGERIANS WHO IT ANTICIPATES WILL BE EXPelled FROM OJUDA REGION SOON.

5. AMCONSUL ORAN HAS REPORTED THAT MOROCCANS IN WESTERN ALGERIA ARE BEING HARRASSED BY ALGERIAN AUTHORITIES WHO HAVE TAKING AWAY MOROCCANS' WORK PERMITS BUT HAVE REFUSED TO ALLOW THEM TO LEAVE COUNTRY. AMCONSUL ORAN HAS ALSO LEARNED THAT SOME 50 MOROCCANS ARE IN JAIL IN ORAN. THERE ARE NUMEROUS REPORTS THAT MOROCCANS, TUNISIANS, AND SPANIARDS RESIDENT IN ALGIERS ARE BEING CLOSELY SURVILLED.

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3511

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6. POLISARIO EMISSARIES ON MOVE: PRESS DECEMBER 16 REPORTS THAT POLISARIO REP MAHJOUB MAJID ABDERRAHMAN IS IN LIMA ON LATIN AMERICAN TOUR AIMED AT DRUMMING UP SUPPORT FOR POLISARIO. SECOND MILITANT, HABIBULLAH, RECENTLY RETURNED FROM SIMILAR MISSION IN AFRICA.

7. MOROCCAN-SPANISH "COLLUSION" ON PHOSPHATES: DECEMBER 16 PRESS REPORTS GOS-GOM AGREEMENT UNDER WHICH SAHARA PHOSPHATE PROCEEDS TO BE SPLIT 65-35 BETWEEN MOROCCO AND SPAIN. THIS, ARTICLE SAYS, SHOULD PERMIT

HASSAN TO FULFILL HIS OBLIGATION TO SUPPLY 10,000,000
TONS OF PHOSPHATES ANNUALLY TO US BETWEEN 1980 AND 1990,
A COMMITMENT HE COULD NEVER HAVE MET WITHOUT USING SAH-
ARAN DEPOSITS. HOWEVER, ARTICLE CONCLUDES, PLAN WILL
BE THWARTED BECAUSE BOU CRAA PHOSPHATE WORKERS,
WHO HAVE BEEN GIVEN MONTH OFF OSTENSIBLY TO CELEBRATE
MOROCCAN AND MUSLIM HOLIDAYS, WILL NEVER RETURN TO WORK.
WORKERS, PIECE ASSERTS, HAVE JOINED THOSE FIGHTING MOROCCAN
INVASION.

8. COMMENT: ALGERIANS OBVIOUSLY SEEKING TO CAPTURE WORLD'S
ATTENTION WITH REPORT OF MOROCCAN ATROCITIES IN SAHARA. SPANISH
PRESS HAS BEEN HELPFUL TO THEM IN THIS REGARD AND PIECE
IN DECEMBER 14-15 LE MONDE BY PAPER'S ALGIERS
CORRESPONDENT, PAUL BALTA, WILL BE AS WELL. BALTA SPENT
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TIME WITH POLISARIO IN SHARA LAST
MONTH, AND HIS ARTICLE REFLECTS, ALBEIT WITH MORE RE-
STRAINT, MANY ALGERIAN PRESS THEMES. VISIT OF UNHCR
DELEGATION (ALGIERS 3853 NOTAL) TO ALGERIA SHOULD ALSO
BE GOOD FOR FURTHER PROPAGANDA MILEAGE.

9. IN FINAL ANALYSIS, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE PROPAGANDA
CAMPAIGN WILL NEED CONTINUED SUSTENANCE OF POLISARIO
ACTIVITY ON GROUND. WHETHER GUERRILLAS WILL BE EQUAL
TO TASK WHEN FAR GETS INTO HIGH GEAR IN COLONY REMAINS
TO BE SEEN.

10. WHATEVER MILITARY SUCCESSES POLISARIO MAY BE HAVING,
WE FIND IT HARD TO IMAGINE THAT ITS EMISSARIES CAN
BE MAKING MUCH OF AN IMPACT DURING THEIR TOURS. THOSE
WE HAVE SEEN ARE SHAGGY, STUDENT-AGE TYPES WHO WE DOUBT
WOULD MAKE MUCH OF AN IMPRESSION ON GOVERNMENTS BEFORE
WHICH THEY PLEADING THEIR CASE.PARKER

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